What One Photo is Worth November 14

Those who pass the portraits of former deputy directors in the entrance hall at NSA Fort Meade may perhaps notice the photograph of the first civilian D/DIR Joseph Ream. The Eisenhower Administration wanted government agencies to take advantage of outside business experience, so Ream was hired from CBS News. He was not comfortable in the position and had illness in his family, so he served a little more than a year, August 1957 to October 1958.

When the D/DIR portraits were first put into the entrance hallway, NSA did not have a full picture of Joseph Ream, so the people responsible used the then equivalent of Photoshop. They extracted Ream's head from a group photo and superimposed it on somebody else's torso. The photograph looked out of proportion, some even used the adjective "grotesque," no matter what angle it was viewed from.

In 1996, NSA was set to open its new supercomputer building, and it was named after former Deputy Director Louis Tordella. It also was decided to name the access road after Joseph Ream. Mr. Ream had passed away in 1988, but the Ream family was delighted to hear news of the road name, and sent a delegation of family members to the dedication ceremony.

On October 29, the Ream family representatives were taken to the director's office for a courtesy call. In the entrance hallway, they were shown the Ream portrait among the former deputy directors. They were appalled at the portrait and arranged to send a studio photograph to substitute.

So, now, Joseph Ream is properly represented by a very attractive professional portrait.